

UPDATE March 2017

A variety of activities involving IVRS and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) continue to occur. Since last September, IVRS amended all state and federal contracts for the six Iowa CILs. IVRS also provides financial support to the Statewide Independent Living Council, and participates as part of that board at quarterly meetings.

IVRS' recent reduction in IVRS state funding could have been applied to decrease CIL funds; however Administrator Mitchell decided to make cuts elsewhere so as to not reduce the allotment IVRS provides to Iowa CILs.

Two CILs have developed employment programs which will expand capacity and choice for job candidates served under the traditional IVRS program. Access 2 Independence in Iowa City is currently approved to provide Job Development, Customized Employment, Supported Employment Job Coaching and Job Follow-Up and Non-Supported Employment Job Coaching. It is anticipated that these five employment services will soon be available through the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living in Des Moines.

There are approximately 71 individual clients currently working with Robert Hendrickson of the IVRS IL program. At this point in time, all clients who had an application date of 1/11/16 or meaning applications prior to 1/11/16, have been removed from the waiting list or attempts have been made to make contact with them so that we can remove their names from the waiting list if they will respond. The 3+ year waiting list has been whittled down to just a little over a 1 year waiting list. IVRS sent contact letters to 45 clients requesting they make contact with Bob to discuss what services they need and inform them their names would be coming off the waiting list. If IVRS doesn't hear from them via the contact letter, we will start the process of making phone calls to the client, and or their listed contacts if we can't get ahold of the actual client. Bob is actively working with 19 clients who have a project in the works or are currently getting bids for jobs. The majority of the work needing done includes widening of doorways, modifying bathroom, and building ramps.

In March, 2017, IVRS hosted a meeting originated by Page Eastin of the Department of Human Rights with CIL Executive Directors and interested stakeholders, including IVRS. Due to the nature of the core services that each CIL is required to provide, a discussion was held to outline options for *Self-Advocacy*, *Self-Determination* and *Peer Mentoring* services. CILs are in the process of providing models on how these services are currently delivered in order to be incorporated into a curriculum that can be shared. Additional training materials and a tool listing current resources that exist in each area of the state is also under development.

The Annual Performance Report for State Independent Living Services Program was completed by IVRS and the Statewide Independent Living Council. It was submitted through SILC in January, 2017. This report combines a synopsis of activities, data, outcomes and goals for what was the 704 Report, now referred to as the "Program Performance Report".

IVRS participated in several webinars about IL information specific to Title VII Part C and Part B - provided by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). A secondary webinar series from

the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) has been archived after being viewed by staff from IVRS, Iowa Department for the Blind and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This webinar series was designed to acquaint Designated State Entities and Statewide Independent Living Councils about their roles and responsibilities for Independent Living programs.

Ongoing meetings are planned between IVRS, SILC, and IDB to schedule annual visits with each of the six Iowa CILs.

Independent Living – September 2016

IVRS oversees state and federal contracts for six Iowa Center's for Independent Living and our State-Wide Independent Living Council. (SWILC) The SWILC has a representative on our State Rehabilitation Council for purposes of sharing information and helping to advocate for applicable services and supports. The Independent Living Programs moved from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to the Administration of Community Living under the Workforce Innovation Act. IVRS participates in the SILC and is part of a collaborative team effort led by the Centers and SILC representatives to develop and implement a State-Wide Independent Living Plan. As part of the plan, IVRS reports on IL services and outreach efforts. Below is a summary for what is included in the plan. The six IL centers in Iowa are:

Access 2 Independence, Iowa City
Central Iowa Center for Independent Living, Des Moines
Disabilities Resource Center of Siouxland, Sioux City
Illinois, Iowa Center for Independent Living, Quad Cities
League of Human Dignity, Council Bluffs
South Central Iowa Independent Living Center, Oskaloosa

The primary goal of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is to maximize every client's opportunity to reach their economic, independence and employment goals. An equally important goal is to increase advocacy and support for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Because IVRS is an integral part of the statewide disability community, we collaborate with partner agencies to improve effectiveness in all areas of Iowa. IVRS uses a network of outside agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities, in addition to those that offer specific services or assistance to minority populations.

Currently, IVRS is partnering with nearly 100 organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services. IVRS has connected with agencies that serve diverse populations within each area office. We have also found that some individuals served by IVRS require Independent Living Services. IVRS is able to connect these individuals to any of the six Independent Living Centers in Iowa. IVRS also provides services or assistance on behalf of individuals referred by a CIL for services from IVRS. As a partner and Designated State Entity, IVRS provides financial and programmatic monitoring to each of Iowa's six CILs.

IVRS currently supports an in-house Independent Living/Assistive Technology Counselor Specialist who is responsible for providing each IVRS office an orientation to the Independent Living Program in FFY17. This individual will also connect CIL and IVRS offices, and present information on the role of IL services to increase independence for individual recipients of services, including how IL services can complement VR service programming.

IVRS continues to increase service capacity, work effectiveness and outreach through advances in information and assistive technologies. The IVRS Administrator and IL staff communicate regularly with partners; and have an ongoing interest and commitment to expand and explore collaborative opportunities. IVRS is dedicated to building external collaborative relationships to enhance results for Iowans with disabilities. Towards that end, IVRS continues to identify, develop and pursue partnerships to expand the ability of various systems to positively impact services to Iowans. IVRS' IL service delivery program has limited resources and a waiting list for recipients, however remains able to provide services that are unique and not duplicated by the IL Centers, in addition to not being restricted by geographic coverage.

The IVRS IL Specialist will continue to coordinate IL direct service delivery across the state of Iowa with the goal of serving increased numbers through direct service delivery and through the use of comparable benefits and services. IVRS IL staff will continue to monitor and support IL efforts by providing technical assistance to SILC and CILS as needed; presenting IVRS updates to IL partners and communicate any changes in regulatory requirements; and participating in shared leadership and self-advocacy initiatives with SILC and CILS.

IVRS will also provide information about training and other opportunities to all CILS and SILC. Collaboration and joint training will be emphasized between IVRS and partner agencies this next fiscal year. IVRS also intends on providing information about IL programs directly to clients of the agency. IVRS will also ensure the Independent Living plan is implemented with services consistent with the IL State Plan and targeted for those clients in the IL Program, and consistent with WIOA changes.